2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

142
224
291
[411]

Net-hunting. Bringing out the nets.

The nets stretched across the bush ready for a drive.

facing p. 344

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

224 411 [435 23] (*d*) *Spears, bows, dogs, and guns.* The Bemba occasionally hunt in twos and threes with spears and dogs. Trained dogs are very valuable—about 10*s.*—and hard to buy. I never saw hunters go out with dogs, but I know that they are extremely skilful in throwing spears at a distance of about twenty feet, and that they sometimes kill small duiker in this manner. Bows and arrows are carried by very old men only and used to shoot at monkeys raiding gardens. [428] A bow is handed down ceremoniously to a dead man's heir but is not often used in the hunt. It is the ambition of every native to own a muzzle-loading gun, which he can purchase for about 30*s.* and obtain a Government licence to use. Many Bemba still go to the mines for no other purpose than to earn the money for a gun, which seems to promise security and prestige in their old age. However, many of these guns are in fact more deadly to the hunter than to the quarry, since they are rammed with shot, slag iron, and rusty nails till the long-suffering barrels explode. It is unlikely that many buck are killed in this way.

[177 643] European rifles are owned only by hunters employed by Europeans, or chiefs. The Bemba are said to be skilled trackers and think nothing of spending two or three days in pursuit of game. Game which is killed with a gun is the property of the shooter, to divide as he pleases, after he has given a portion to the nearest headman or chief. There is no special ritual attached to shooting, although the hunter may ask a blessing from the headman if he wishes, and in any case calls on his *imipashi* and carries magic charms.

224 463 (*e*) *Elephant hunters.* The Bemba elephant hunters were typical magician-specialists (*ifibinda*), i.e. they possessed both skill and the magic necessary to give them success. Elephants were killed formerly by the aid of weighted spears of specially heavy make by hunters known as *bashimunini*, with dogs and spears and large crowds of beaters by another type of hunter known as *bakalongwe*, or with guns traded from the Arabs by those called *Bafundi*. Nowadays elephant hunters only work for the Government or for certain big chiefs with special permission. The ordinary native is allowed to kill an elephant only when it is actually raiding his garden.

[422] All elephant hunters were under the direct control of the chief in the old days, and he had the monopoly of the ivory so obtained. The chief summoned the hunters, but they were led by the *icibinda*.

226 439 must fish or starve. Fish, however, is not only regarded as food, but is also used as an article of trade. The supply in Lake Bangweulu seems to be virtually inexhaustible. The Unga can sell their fish for meal at a good price on the Copperbelt and elsewhere and are therefore unwilling to leave this otherwise undesirable habitat.

226 A number of methods of fishing are employed, such as netting, the setting of lines, trapping fish in baskets set in weirs, catching fish in baskets at low water, and poisoning. The diversity of fishing methods is not as great as it is for instance among the Lozi further south,(1) but since the Unga are able to catch plenty of fish with their traditional technique, improvements of method seem unlikely.

226 423 Netting grounds are available to all, but weirs have a fixed ownership. In certain circumstances a chief may reallocate a weir, but generally the owner has the absolute right of use. He calls in friends and relatives to fish and to repair the weir and each keeps the fish caught in his own basket.

439 Fish may either be sold at the waterside or taken to Kapalala - the ferry over the Luapula at the Congo border - or to the markets on the Copperbelt. A better price is obtainable at the latter but against that has to be set the time involved and expense incurred (such as the purchase of a bicycle or the canoe to Kapalala, and thence by lorry to Ndola). Of those selling at the waterside, some sell to African consumers, some to middlemen, some to Missions and some to representatives of European firms. Many fishermen, however, find their way to Mufulira market on the Copperbelt to market their own fish.(2)

The following figures taken by Brelsford in 1943 from some 250 Unga fishermen show the distribution of their choice:-(3)

64% sold their fish either in Kapalala or Ndola.
12% sold on the mainland at places like Fort Rosebery.
24% sold at the waterside.

CRAFTS

412 Bemba equipment is of the simplest kind. There are only four main implements: an axe-blade, locally forged and fixed into a wooden haft,(4) used for clearing the bush and most other wood-cutting jobs; iron hoe blades, also fixed into wooden hafts, were formerly traded from the Lungu; [411] a spear, locally forged, used in war, hunting and fishing; and, finally the bow, now rarely made. These tools are of the simplest kind, neither carved nor decorated and, generally speaking, crafts are poorly developed. Decorative iron-work, which reached a high level of development among the 325 Luba peoples, hardly exists. Iron-smelting is still practised among the Aushi(5) and was recently revived among the Chishinga(6) group, formerly

(1) Gluckman, 1941. (2) Brelsford, ?. 1947.
(3) Brelsford, 5, 1946, gives a more detailed treatment on the subject.
(4) Mass produced European tools are now superseding the others.
(5) Barnes, 1926.
(6) Brelsford, 7, 1949.

231 encouraged and there are now a few herds in the valley. Horses and mules are lacking. The donkey ridden by Gamitto when he made his entry in 1830 was the first of the species to be seen in the country.(1) The villagers keep poultry and some small stock, mainly goats and sheep.

FISHING

226 Fish abound in the Luapula, the riverside lagoons and Lakes Mweru and Mofwe. Livingstone collected the vernacular names of thirty-nine species caught in Lake Mweru.(2) Some fishing goes on all the year round but the season, when the men move to the fishing camps on the river islands, extends from September to January. In the shallow marshland pools the fish are speared while laying their eggs. In flowing water they are trapped in conical wickerwork baskets set in rocky falls or in the openings in a weir.(3) On Lake Mweru they are caught from canoes with hook and line. On the Luapula the people go out in their dugouts at night and drive the fish into seine-nets (*ubukonde*) by hitting the surface of the water with wooden discs attached to poles.(4) Large-scale fishing is done with [177] drag-nets (*umukwau*) which require several men to pull them. Formerly nets were made by men from barkcloth cord. Nowadays nylon and cotton nets are [278] used. Vegetable poisons and stupefacients, now banned, were employed in the past.

HUNTING

223 Hunting and fowling are spare-time activities. Elephants and buffa-
224 loes, which in Livingstone's time used to be chased into the Mofwe mudflats during the rainy season and killed in great numbers,(5) are no longer found
● [411] in Kazembe's country though some still remain on the Belgian Congo side. Large herds of lechwe antelope roam the swamp country beyond the inhabited belt. Fire-arms have displaced the traditional weapons.

DIET

251 The basic foodstuffs are cassava(6) and fish. Game, poultry, fruit
252 and wild bees' honey, supplement the diet. Cassava is soaked in water,
262 peeled and sun-dried for storing. The root, after being pounded and ground
273 on a stone, is made into porridge and flavoured with groundnuts or other relish. Sweet cassava is eaten roasted.(7) Fish is consumed fresh or dried, game fresh or smoked. Fish, when dried in the sun or over a fire, will keep for three months. Water-lily roots, on which, according to tradition, the aboriginal pygmies fed, are considered a delicacy. Native-made alcoholic beverages were millet beer(8) (still made), *Borassus* palm wine, mead(9) and a spirit distilled from maize.(10) Oil is expressed from palm
276 fruit(11) and from groundnuts and vinegar used to be made from bananas.(12) Tobacco is taken as snuff and smoked in pipes.(13) *Bhang* (hemp), was

(1) Burton, op.cit., p.252.
(2) Livingstone, op.cit., p.245.
(3) Brelsford, 2, 1947, pp.70, 71.
(4) Holmes, 1925, p.26.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.248, 276, 299.
(6) Burton, op.cit., p.40.
(7) ibid., p.101.
(8) ibid., p.43.
(9) Gamitto, II, p.26; Valdez, II, p.246.
(10) Bowdich, p.91.
(11) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.243, 278.
(12) ibid, p.272.
(13) ibid., p.251; Gamitto, I, p.401.

also have been employed. Household utensils and vessels were fashioned from wood and gourds. Bracelets and other ornaments were manufactured from copper-wire or copper bars purchased from the Nyamezi who smelted copper in Katanga. The traditional arms were spear, assegai, *pocur* (the short, broad-bladed, two-edged Lunda sword) and battle-axe.(1) A defensive weapon was the square, lightwood shield said to be unpierceable after being soaked in water.(2). Bows and arrows were apparently not used in war.(3)

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

CLAN ORGANIZATION(4)

The clan (*mukowa*) consists of persons, alive and dead, believed to be descended matrilineally from a common ancestor or ancestress, even though they may not be able to trace their ancestry. The clans, now dispersed, have each a traditional home, *ntulo* (a word also used for the source of a river), a common totemic name (usually the generic name of an animal or plant), and a common slogan, *tlumbo* (from *ukulumba*, to boast). In principle clans are exogamous but in fact this is not observed; the exogamous unit is the *cibota*, a subdivision of the clan. Each clan stands in a joking relationship (*bwali*) to one, or sometimes more than one other, with which its name is connected by an association of ideas. Examples of such paired clans are: the leopard and the goat (because leopards kill goats), the iron and the elephants (elephants were hunted with iron-headed spears), the mushroom and the ant-hill (mushrooms thrive on ant-hills). No preferential marriage obtains between the *bali* (persons in joking relationship) as is the case among the Bemba. In the mortuary ceremonies a special role is assigned to a *mwali* of the deceased. An isolated instance of an inter-clan avoidance pattern is provided by the Lion (*Bena Nkalamo*) and the Snake clans. Members of a clan are supposed to give hospitality to their fellow-clansmen whatever their tribal affiliation.

Clan organisation is believed to be universal and coeval with mankind. No mythical explanation of the origin of clans is offered. Religious or ritual cults are not practised on a clan basis. There is no prohibition against killing or eating the object from which the clan derives its name, nor, on the other hand, is any special veneration required.

The clans are not hierarchically organised though, in fact, some may enjoy greater prestige owing to their numerical strength or connections and others may be regarded as of little consequence, like the derided Pins and Needles clan. The clan to which the Kazembe's mother belongs is, for the duration of his reign, placed in a privileged position.

As a rule the clans have no specialised economic or ritual functions although the intervention of the Fish clan (*Bena Mpende*) is invoked when the water is too low for the salaam to reach their normal spawning grounds. No clan meetings are held.

(1) Valdez, op.cit., p.229.
(2) ibid. (3) Burton, p.43.
(4) Based on information provided by I.G. Cunnison who is at present engaged on an intensive study of the Luapula peoples.